

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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BUDGET MUST DO MORE TO HELP SCHOOLS, TAXPAYERS TO GET KUZMAN'S SUPPORT

INDIANAPOLIS – Any proposed state budget before the Indiana General Assembly must do more to help Hoosier schoolchildren and taxpayers to get the support of State Rep. Bob Kuzman (D-Crown Point).

"Conferees have started to work on House Bill 1001, the biennial state budget, and House Bill 1120, which contains the Senate Republican plan to finance that budget through a series of tax increases," Kuzman said. "While the Senate Republican version of House Bill 1001 is a little better than the House Republican version of that bill, these proposals both fall far short of providing what the people of Indiana need. Until there are drastic improvements, I will not support the budget."

As he has throughout this legislative session, Kuzman said there are two major areas in which the Republican budget plans are deficient: cuts in state funding for schools and increases in local property taxes.

"Under the House Republican budget, local property taxes will increase by nearly 11 percent for Merrillville Public Schools, nearly 14 percent for the Tri-Creek School Corporation, and nearly 10 percent for the Crown Point School Corporation," Kuzman said. "This will mean millions of dollars in property tax increases for people who live in these school districts. These schools also will be forced to seek additional funding for transportation costs. If they do not raise local property taxes, schools will have to cut programs and lay off teachers, which will increase class sizes and effectively stop recent education reforms."

"Both Republican budgets also place a cap on Property Tax Replacement Credits (PTRC), a move that will increase local property taxes and reverse several years of bipartisan efforts to reduce the impact of property taxes as a tool to fund local government," he added. "These maneuvers will cause local property taxes to increase by as much as 40 percent if they are allowed to become law."

Recognizing the difficulty of passing such a bogus budget, Kuzman was certain Republicans will attempt to influence Democrats to support their proposals by including such proposals as the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and funding for a new Indianapolis Colts stadium in the bill.

"Since they cannot sell their own people on the worth of shortchanging education and raising property taxes, Republicans will resort to any tactic possible to try and gain Democratic support," Kuzman said. "Rather than judging the RTA on its own merits, they will attempt to use it as a bargaining chip to gain support for the budget. I believe the people of Northwest Indiana will see through such a shoddy plan, and join me in asking for the Republicans to be responsible in handling the major policy questions of this session."

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This news release can be accessed on the Internet at www.IN.gov/H19